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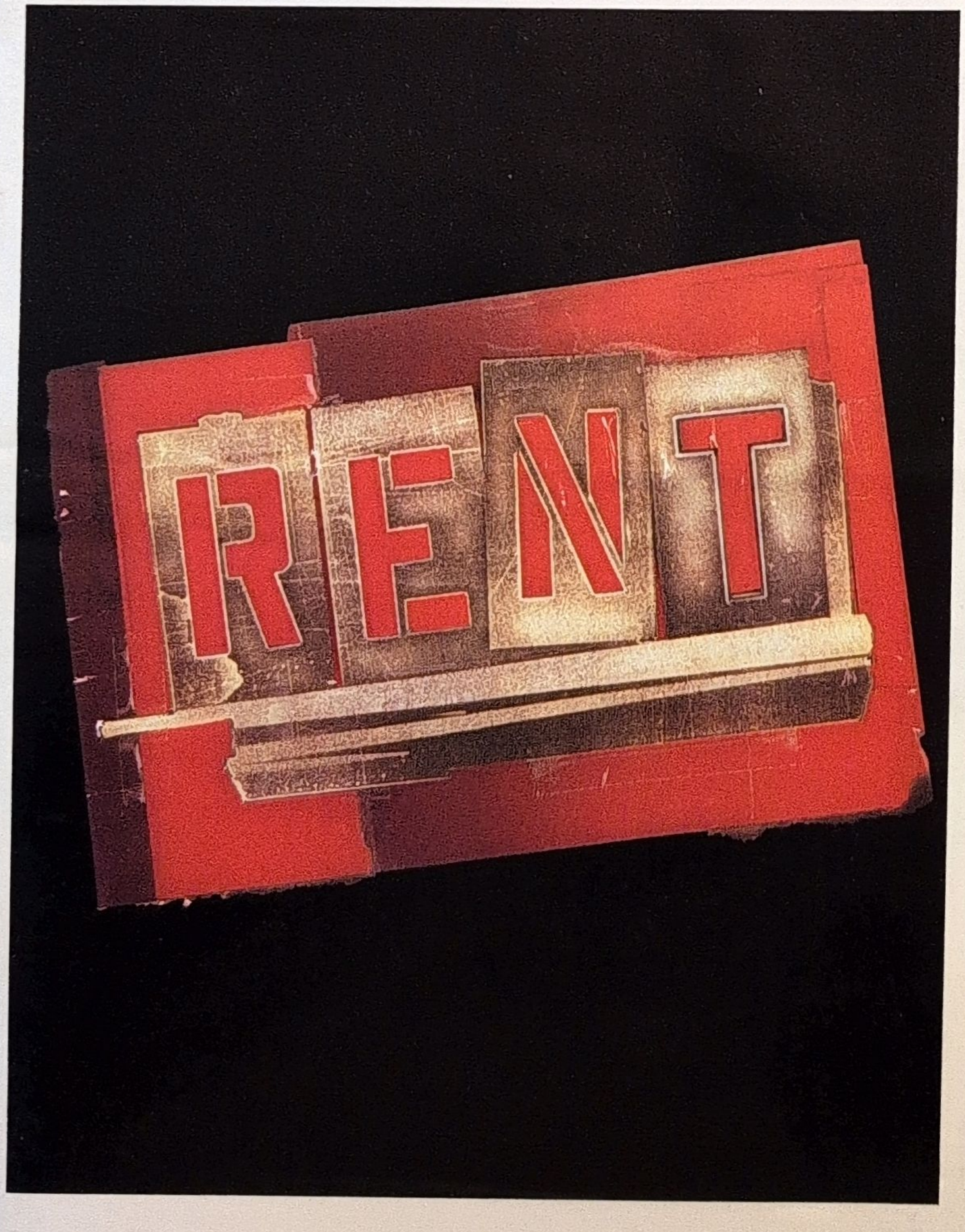

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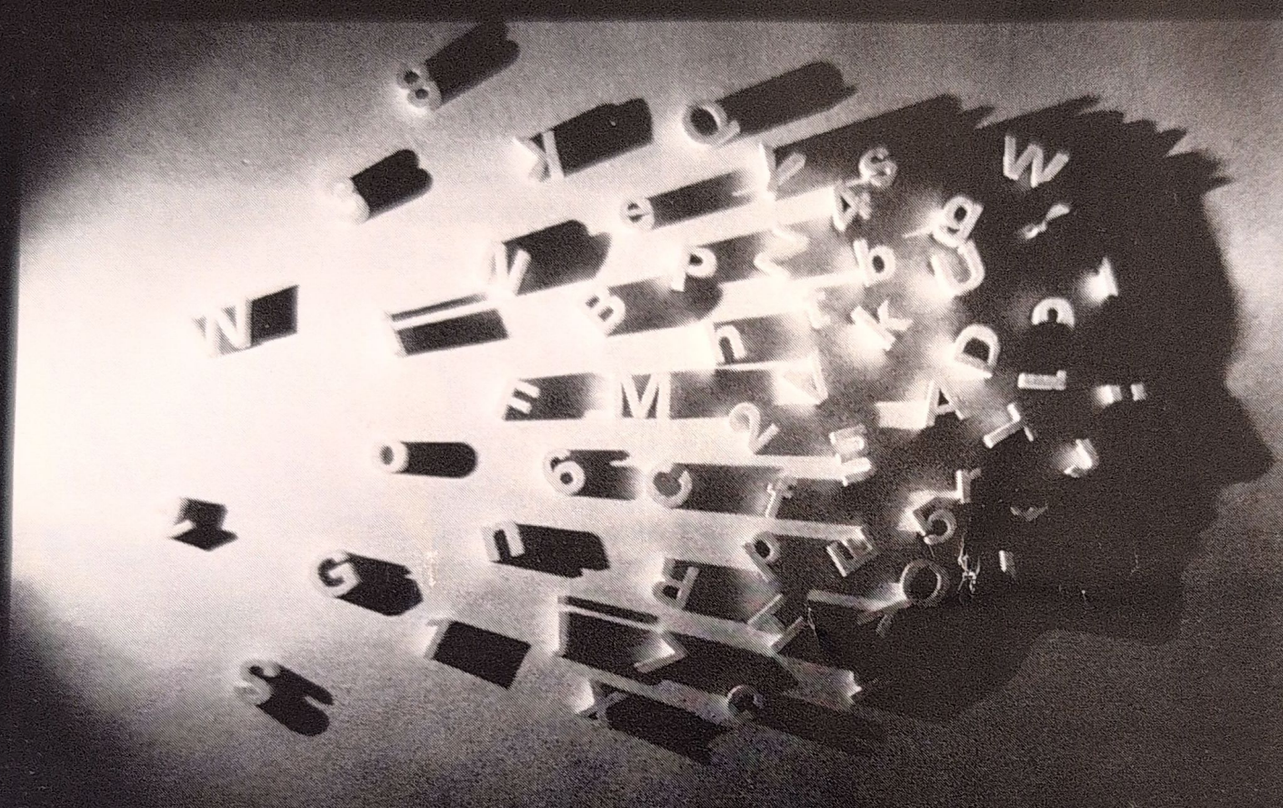
# YB predictable?



*Untitled (Profile), 1994* by Kumi Yamashita

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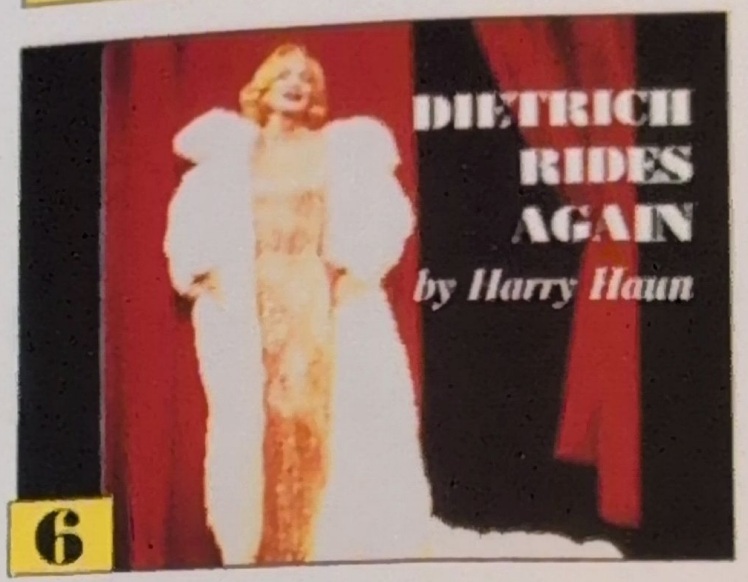


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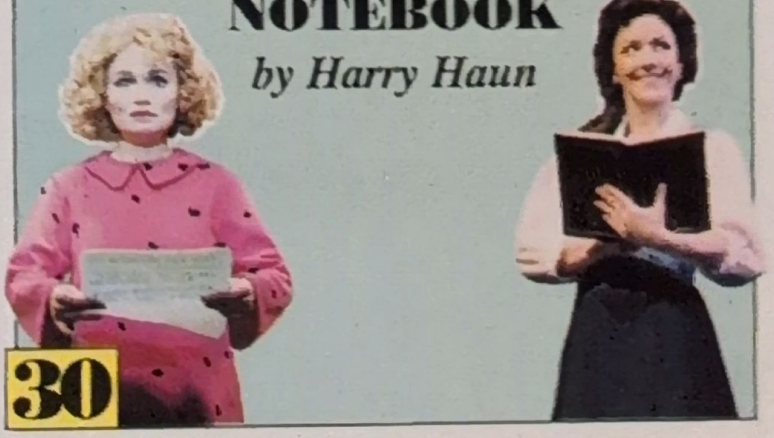


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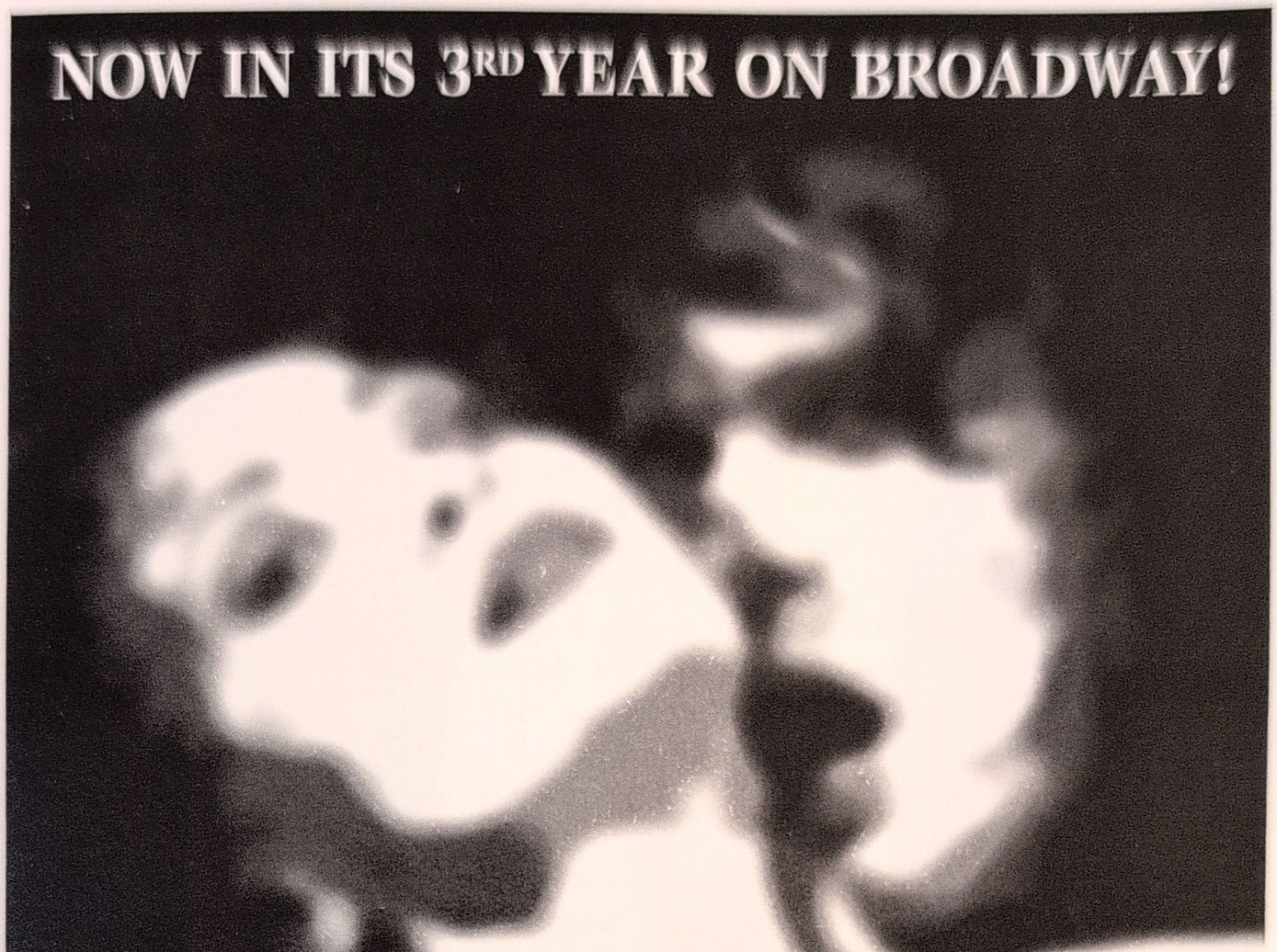

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# DIETRICH RIDES AGAIN

X. MARTIN / JET SET / DENIS TARANTO

*Siân Phillips stars in Pam Gems's* Marlene

by Harry Haun

Breakfast at The Plaza's Palm Court was just the sort of Star stunt that Marlene Dietrich believed in, so it probably would have pleased her that the perpetuator of her myth—the Broadway *Marlene* (Cort Theatre)—walked from the Wyndham one rainy day recently to breakfast there with the press. Glamour does require its sacrifices, after all.

Seconding that motion is the fact that "breakfast" these days for the slim and stylish Siân Phillips consists of tea, water, a grapefruit and a boiled egg. "My eating is prescribed," she says. "Once the beads are on that dress, it cannot be altered."

Going through the same ordeals Dietrich did to create a luminous, larger-than-life illusion has deepened Phillips's admiration for the star. "Marlene was so formidable. I thought, 'Oh, how am I ever going to do this?' The amount of work that goes into getting the wig right and the dress right—it seemed insurmountable to me. And, unless you get the physical appearance right, you can't do the show. So that was hard. Finding out who could make that dress, who *knew how to make it*, was really quite difficult. The wig I had

***"This is a deconstruction of* Marlene," *says Phillips (right, as Dietrich) " . . . you see the legend, repackaged."***

CAROL ROSEGG

made by the same people who used to make Marlene's wigs. Paul Huntley is dressing it here, but it was made in Wig Creations in London where Paul used to work. At Wig Creations, they still have all her original notes, and we used them.

"We play her in her late sixties—at a point where it is becoming difficult to preserve the legend, when the performance is not as easy for her as it had been. She had to go out and deliver 100% allure. There was no option, and that gets harder as you get older. Plus the legs. Her legs were lacerated when she fell off the stage once and were not healing. They were bleeding and wrapped in bandages, which is why she stopped wearing the slit skirt.

"In a sense," allows Phillips, "this *is* a deconstruction of Marlene. The play takes place in her dressing room on the first night of her famous Paris concerts in the late sixties, in the two hours leading up to that performance. Act I, you see the working woman backstage. Then I put on the dress and go out to do the concert. Act II is the interval of that actual concert where she's back in her dressing room, not really wanting to go back out there. Then, at the end, they get her to go on—it becomes very glamorous—and I do the concert, 15 or so songs. You get to see the legend, repackaged. We try to present the icon."

As becomes a legend most, *Marlene* had a surreally long gestation time—18 years if you go all the way back to Siân's first fling at musical comedy (Vera in a West End revival of *Pal Joey*). Before you could say "Zip," it was apparent that her voice was poured from the same bottle of dark bourbon as Marlene's. Sara Randall, Phillips's agent, was the first to point this out, and she planted the seed that became *Marlene*. "'Look,' she told me, 'everyone says you look like Marlene in this show and sound like Marlene—why don't you do a show about Marlene?' Well, at the time, I had no interest whatsoever in doing this."

The matter lay dormant until 1993 when Phillips was working with director Sean Mathias and adapter Pam Gems on a new version of Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Randall decided it was time to run that Marlene notion by Phillips again. "She said to me, 'Listen, you are working with the perfect person to write *Marlene*. Why don't you ask her?' So I did, and she did. Then I bought the rights from Pam and sat on them for a year until the National Theatre finally let us workshop in there, with Sean Mathias directing."

Randall was right in thinking Gems would be in sync with such a show. The playwright previously retooled *The Blue Angel*, which put Dietrich on the map, for Trevor Nunn to stage in London—plus, she has a keen knack for capturing the soul of creative artists (i.e., her sole contributions to Broadway—*Stanley* [Spencer] in 1997, and [Edith] *Piaf* in 1981). Dietrich, as a character, even injected a little comic relief in the latter—although not as much as in the London production. "Marlene had to be reduced for the Broadway version of *Piaf* because of objections from her family," says Phillips. "I don't know the precise nature of the objections, but Pam said it wasn't worth the hassle, so she just trimmed the part down so no one would be upset." That little incident foreshadowed the massive amount of Marlene-meddling that has visited Phillips on this project. "The play has changed completely from what we did in London."

Some of the alterations seem almost heaven sent. "I was lucky in Paris to meet Marlene's part-time secretary who came in every day for the last 12 years of her life. I met some people who toured with her—her lighting man, the widow of her musical director, one of her dancers. They've all given me stuff, and I'd ring Pam and I'd say, 'Can I put this in?' She'd say, 'Fine.' So I've put in dialogue that's actually Marlene's."

Dietrich wouldn't have it any other way. P

The Company of Rent

JOAN MARCUS

# Rent's Long-Term Lease on Life

After waiting on line or on hold to buy tickets to the smash hit musical *Rent,* if you're looking for someone to blame, try Henry Murger (1822-1861). The short-lived French writer probably never dreamed that *Scènes de la vie de bohème,* his stories of life among the "bohemian" artists in Paris's Latin Quarter, would change the face of the world's musical theatre—not once but twice. Murger made a stage version of his tales, which had a respectable run in 1849 Paris. The work only became a beloved classic half a century later, when it was taken up by Giacomo Puccini, Italian opera's then-rising star.

Even Puccini's 1896 opera, *La Bohème,* now one of the best-loved works in all classical music, didn't have it easy at first: When it opened, *La Bohème* wasn't popular with the critics, who found its subject matter sordid and its heartfelt tunes old-fashioned. The operagoing public liked it, though, and hasn't stopped liking it ever since.

Cut to New York City in the late 1980s: Jonathan Larson, a young artist from the suburban town of White Plains, is living in a rundown flat in the warehouse-dotted district south of Greenwich Village, where young artists have increasingly begun to migrate, in search of cheap rents and an escape from the rigid, stratified lifestyle of America in the Reagan years. Larson has a dream of rejuvenating the waning art of the Broadway musical, keeping the tunefulness and verbal alertness that made it great, but combining them with the spirit and outlook of a generation raised on rock.

After abandoning an unworkable attempt at a futuristic musical, *Superbia,* and arousing some interest with an innovative but unformed "rock monologue" about turning thirty, *tick...tick...BOOM!,* he's introduced to Billy Aronson, a young playwright

with an idea in search of a composer: an up-to-date *La Bohème,* set in the lively, impoverished artists' mecca of the East Village. Excited, Larson starts work. The collaborators can't see eye to eye on the project and quickly split apart; Larson goes ahead on his own.

The plot Puccini's librettists, Giacosa and Illica, carved from Murger's stories for *La Bohème is* the story of four young artists sharing an unheated flat.

Through a series of readings and workshops, guided by feedback from his colleagues, Larson reworked the elegant paradigm of Puccini's structure into a story that would convey the same feelings to a more complex time. Instead of being preoccupied bachelors, Collins and Angel, his Colline and Schaunard, are a gay male couple. The easy-going painter Marcello becomes the tormented filmmaker Mark, into whose character Larson put his deepest fears about the difficulty of creating, and of sustaining a relationship. Instead of flighty, devil-may-care Musetta, Mark loves the politically aware performance artist Maureen, whose demanding ego has its own complicated issues to sort out: Her wealthy "patron," Alcindor, becomes her lesbian lover, Joanne, an intense, career-driven woman of color from a high-pressure, well-to-do family.

Even more strikingly, Larson stretched the story to show its economic underpinnings, turning the artists' surly landlord, Benoit, into a sometime friend who sees their raw loft space as a marketable commodity in a gentrifying time. Refusing to soften the picture, Larson also made the chorus of supporting figures express a variety of viewpoints about the artists' place, or lack of it, on the contested East Village turf that serves as home to so many poor people, foreign and minority, for whom the artists are no more than suburban visitors slumming.

Most of all, Larson expanded *La Bohème's* horizons by including AIDS. *La Bohème's* Mimi is suffering from, and finally dies of tuberculosis. But *Rent's* story of Roger, the rock songwriter and his hard-drug-using neighbor Mimi turns on their HIV-positive status and their reluctance to tell each other about it, as does the contrapuntal story of


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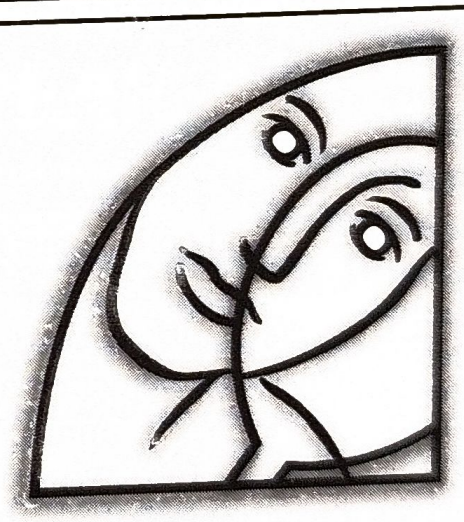

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(continued from page 9)

Collins's evolving love affair with Angel. Just as Murger's original celebration of life in the Latin Quarter didn't leave out its tragedies, Larson's joyous picture of East Village outrageousness makes sure to include its terrors as well as its pleasures.

Nobody could have expected, though, the unpredictable terror that would stalk *Rent* as it went into rehearsal at New York Theatre Workshop, appropriately located in the heart of the East Village. Preview performances were scheduled to begin on January 24, 1996. During the difficult week of technical rehearsals that always precedes the start of public performances, Larson was experiencing severe chest pains and had difficulty breathing. At one point, he collapsed in the theatre and was taken to a nearby emergency room, where they diagnosed food poisoning, pumped his stomach, and sent him home to rest. A few days later, he called in sick rather than come to rehearsal, and went to the emergency room of a different hospital; this time, they told him he had a bad flu.

The groundswell of enthusiasm for *Rent* had already begun, with the cast and production team responding joyfully as Larson and director Michael Greif sharpened the work in rehearsal. The final dress rehearsal was packed with friends and colleagues. An unexpected bonus was the presence of Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times's* classical music critic, who was planning a Sunday piece on the work. With immaculate but unconscious timing, the Workshop had scheduled its dress rehearsal for the 100th anniversary of *La Bohème's* world premiere. After the rehearsal — which drew a standing ovation — Tommasini interviewed Larson, Michael Greff, and NYTW's Artistic Director, James Nicola. Agreeing to meet the other two the next day for a breakfast conference, Larson went home.

No one ever saw him alive again. Around 3:30 AM, his roommate, Brian Carmody, came home and found Jonathan Larson dead on the kitchen floor. The kettle he had put on to make tea, sometime after midnight, was still boiling. What the emergency rooms had diagnosed as flu and food poisoning was in fact a weakness in his aortic wall, which had finally given way. On the verge of his triumphant success, his heart had burst.

The preview performance the next night was cancelled. Instead, cast members, numb with shock and grief went through the show for another invited audience, this time as a memorial tribute to its author and composer. They began seated at tables, reading rather than going through the movements they had been rehearsing for a month. But the swell of feeling was too great: For the second act, Greff had the tables removed, and the cast was on their feet. The final audience response, though silent, was devastating, with feelings of loss almost tangible in the room. Nobody seems to know the name of the person who broke the long, heavy silence by calling out, "Thank you, Jonathan Larson," making the theatre explode into a thunderstorm of applause and cheers.

The rest of *Rent's* story is almost too evident to need retelling. It became a Off-Broadway, and then a Broadway, sensation. It won Obie Awards, and Tony Awards, and a Pulitzer Prize and pretty much everything else for which works of musical theatre can receive a certificate, plaque, or statuette. The Larson family, heirs to the unexpected millions of an artist's commercial triumph, have perpetuated Jonathan's memory with a foundation established to aid young creators. The tunes, lyrics, and bantering lines of *Rent* have become familiar worldwide. Downtown has moved uptown, with the show's poverty-grunge East Village fashions even inspiring a boutique at the decidedly Upper East Side Bloomingdale's. Like its ancestor *La Bohème, Rent* is a triumph. But, as with the sorrows that led Murger to write down the tragedy of Mimi in the first place, the triumph will always carry a taste of tragedy with it—a celebration of artists and their free-wheeling life that keeps, in its heart, the secret sorrow of an irreplaceable loss. P

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*Michael Feingold is the chief theatre critic of New York's weekly newspaper,* The Village Voice.


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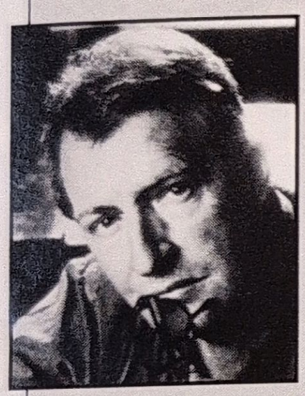
# london ticket

by Sheridan Morley

AUBREY REUBEN



JOAN MARCUS

## Tony Time

As we approach the Tonys, it is a vintage time for the Brits on Broadway. Recent crossovers from here include not only Dame Judi Dench and Samantha Bond in David Hare's *Amy's View,* but Hare himself in his monologue about latter-day Israel, *Via Dolorosa*; Zoë Wanamaker's *Electra;* Judy Parfitt in a rare Broadway staging of Emlyn Williams's *Night Must Fall;* a whole team of Irish players in *The Weir;* and Natasha Richardson and Rupert Graves in *Closer.* Surely an award in there somewhere?

P

*(top to bottom): Zoë Wanamaker, Corin Redgrave, Judy Parfitt and Natasha Richardson*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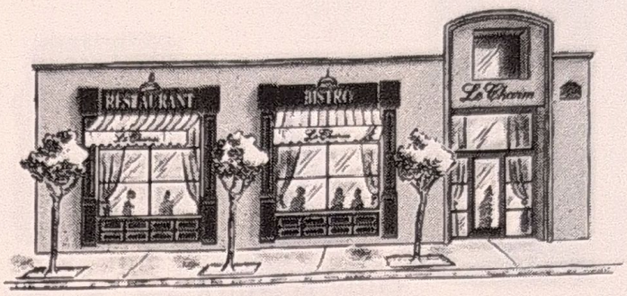


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# A Note About the Plot

Benny is married to Alison Grey of Westport (whom we never see)

BENNY

Benny used to live with Mark and Roger

Benny is Mark and Roger's former roommate. With the help of his wealthy father-in-law, Benny has bought the building in which Mark and Roger live, and the lot next door that is inhabited by a group of homeless people. Benny wants to build a high-tech cyber-arts studio on the property. Toward this end, he plans to clear the homeless from the lot and evict all the tenants from the building, including Mark and Roger.

MARK

Mark used to date Maureen

Mark's former lover, Maureen, schedules a performance protest of Benny's scheme for midnight on Christmas Eve. Benny offers a deal to Mark and Roger: If they convince Maureen to stop her protest, they can stay in the building rent-free.

MAUREEN

JOANNE

At the end of Act I, Maureen stages her performance. A riot erupts in the lot, which Mark videotapes. Then Benny pad-locks the building, locking out all the tenants.

Act II begins on New Year's Eve as Mark, Roger and friends attempt to break back into the building. The rest of the act follows the events of the year.

Benny used to date Mimi

MIMI

ROGER

Mark and Roger are best
friends and roommates

Mark and Roger are friends
with ex-roommate Collins

N

COLLINS

ANGEL

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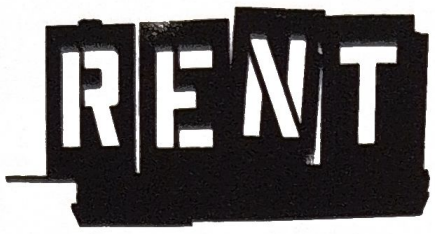


Book, Music and Lyrics by
## Jonathan Larson

with

Christian Anderson Dean Balkwill Marcus Chaney
Courtney Corey Kristoffer Cusick Evan D'Angeles Shaun Earl
Trey Ellett Mark Leroy Jackson Erin Keaney Sharon Leal
Brian M. Love Kamilah Martin Jenny Maxwell Alan Mingo Jr.
Erica Munoz Matthew Murphy Cary Shields Cheri Smith
Robin S. Walker Alicia Westelman

Set Design
Paul Clay

Costume Design
Angela Wendt

Lighting Design
Blake Burba

Sound Design
Kurt Fischer

Musical Arrangements
Steve Skinner

Original Concept / Additional Lyrics
Billy Aronson

Dramaturg
Lynn M. Thomson

Musical Direction
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# CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(in order of appearance)*

Roger Davis ..... Dean Balkwill
Mark Cohen ..... Trey Ellett
Tom Collins ..... Mark Leroy Jackson
Benjamin Coffin III ..... Brian M. Love
Joanne Jefferson ..... Kamilah Martin
Angel Schunard ..... Shaun Earl
Mimi Marquez ..... Sharon Leal
Maureen Johnson ..... Erin Keaney
Mark's mom and others ..... Alicia Westelman
Christmas caroler, Mr. Jefferson and others ..... Alan Mingo Jr.
Mrs. Jefferson, woman with bags and others ..... Robin S. Walker
Gordon, the man, Mr. Grey and others ..... Christian Anderson
Steve, man with squeegee and others ..... Cary Shields
Paul, a waiter, a pastor and others ..... Evan D'Angeles
Alexi Darling, Roger's mom and others ..... Cheri Smith
Cops ..... Kristoffer Cusick, Courtney Corey

## UNDERSTUDIES

*For Roger*—Christian Anderson, Matthew Murphy, Cary Shields; *for Mark*—Kristoffer Cusick, Matthew Murphy; *for Tom Collins*—Marcus Chaney, Alan Mingo Jr.; *for Benny*—Marcus Chaney, Alan Mingo Jr.; *for Joanne*—Jenny Maxwell, Robin S. Walker; *for Angel*—Kristoffer Cusick, Evan D'Angeles; *for Mimi*—Erica Munoz, Cheri Smith; *for Maureen*—Courtney Corey, Erica Munoz, Alicia Westelman.

## Swings

Marcus Chaney, Courtney Corey, Kristoffer Cusick,
Jenny Maxwell, Matthew Murphy, Erica Munoz

## The Band

*Conductor/Keyboards*—Boko Suzuki;
*Bass*—Randy Landau; *Guitar*—Bob Baxmeyer; *Drums*—John Mader;
*Keyboards 2, Guitar 2*—Barry Finnerty

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# SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT ONE

Tune Up/Voice Mail #1 ..... Mark, Roger, Mrs. Cohen, Collins, Benny
Rent ..... The Company
You Okay Honey? ..... Angel, Collins
One Song Glory ..... Roger
Light My Candle ..... Roger, Mimi
Voice Mail #2 ..... Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson
Today 4 U. ..... Angel
You'll See ..... Benny, Mark, Collins, Roger, Angel
Tango: Maureen ..... Mark, Joanne
Life Support ..... Paul, Gordon, The Company
Out Tonight ..... Mimi
Another Day ..... Roger, Mimi, The Company
Will I? ..... The Company
On the Street ..... The Company
Santa Fe ..... Collins and The Company
I'll Cover You ..... Angel, Collins
We're Okay ..... Joanne
Christmas Bells ..... The Company
Over the Moon ..... Maureen
La Vie Bohème/I Should Tell You ..... The Company

## ACT TWO

Seasons of Love ..... The Company
Happy New Year/Voice Mail #3 ..... Mimi, Roger, Mark, Maureen, Joanne, Collins, Angel, Mrs. Cohen, Alexi Darling, Benny
Take Me or Leave Me ..... Maureen, Joanne
Without You ..... Roger, Mimi
Voice Mail #4 ..... Alexi Darling
Contact ..... The Company
I'll Cover You: Reprise ..... Collins, The Company
Halloween ..... Mark
Goodbye, Love ..... Mark, Mimi, Roger, Maureen, Joanne, Collins, Benny
What You Own ..... Pastor, Mark, Collins, Benny, Roger
Voice Mail #5 ..... Roger's mom, Mimi's mom, Mr. Jefferson, Mrs. Cohen
Your Eyes/Finale ..... Roger, The Company

Film by Tony Gerber

# WHO'S WHO

**CHRISTIAN ANDERSON** (*Ensemble*) is very excited to be part of the *Rent* first national tour. Christian performed in bands from New Haven to Seattle, then moved on to regional theatre. He originated the role of Joe Goldman in *Take It Easy* off-Broadway, and was last seen as Roger and Mark in both the Broadway and first national companies of *Rent*. Christian dedicates his performance to the memory of his grandfather.

**DEAN BALKWILL** (*Roger*) made his Broadway debut after having performed with the Canadian company of *Rent*. A native of Saskatchewan, his most important roles are being husband to the greatest woman ever, and, in June '98, becoming a dad. "Thank you, my Heavenly Father, for providing me in every way. And 'Little One,' I love you."

**MARCUS CHANEY** (*Swing*) is happy to join the cast of *Rent*. Credits: *Miss Saigon* (John) Germany, *Don't...Cope, Get Down The Pounds* with Richard Simmons, and recently rejoined his fellow singers at *Motown Cafe* NYC. He would like to thank God and his family for all their support during his career. "LOVE YOU!"

**COURTNEY COREY** (*Performing Swing*) is proud to be making her national touring debut with *Rent*. Regional credits: *Hair* (Jeannie); *Hello, Dolly!* (Irene Molloy); *Ruthless!* (Judy Denmark). A recent graduate of San Diego State, Courtney spent most of 1996 performing at Tokyo Disneyland. She wishes to thank everyone who helped make this dream come true.

**KRISTOFFER CUSICK** *(Performing Swing/ Dance Captain)* is excited to be making his theatrical debut in *Rent*. He has traveled as a singer and dancer throughout Europe and Japan, and choreographed in his native California where he has served as a State Youth Talent Ambassador. Kristoffer would like to thank his family and friends for their unconditional love and support.

**EVAN D'ANGELES** *(Ensemble)*. A native of Long Beach, Calif., Evan joins the *Rent* family directly from Broadway's *Miss Saigon*. Credits: *Rent* (Angel), *Cats* (Mungojerrie/ Skimbleshanks), *My Fair*


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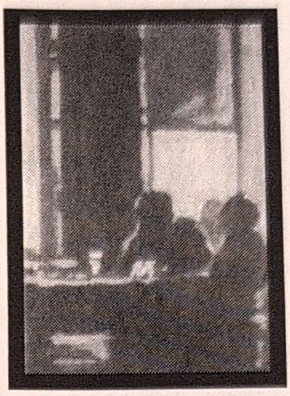

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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

*Lady, The King and I,* Yeston's *Phantom.* TV credits: Disney Channel. An inspiring Christian contemporary artist/songwriter sings his praises, "My love to the Lord, Jesus Christ! To the wise, my friends, my agent John and beloved family...a gift! — Proverbs 3: 5,6."

**SHAUN EARL** *(Angel).* A native of California, he made his Broadway debut as Angel. He appeared on the TV show "Fame" for its last two seasons. Films: *Coming to America* and *The Bodyguard,* among others. Also shared the stage with Paula Abdul, Vanessa Williams and a 2-1/2 year tour with Reba McEntire. His stage debut was in *Fame—The Musical* and he feels blessed and thanks God for performing in the cast of *Rent.*

**TREY ELLETT** (*Mark*). Regional credits: Michael John LaChuisa's new musical *The Highest Yellow, Macbeth* (Malcolm), *The Merchant of Venice* (Lorenzo), *Drood* (John Jasper), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Edmund), seasons at Seaside Music Theatre and Mill Mountain. Co-founder of NYC-based theatre company Eight Productions. "Thanks to incredible friends and family, especially Mom and Caroline, this one's for you!"

**MARK LEROY JACKSON** (*Tom Collins*) made his theatrical debut in *Rent*, appearing in the Broadway, second national tour and London productions. Prior to *Rent*, Mark worked as a studio singer in New York. He would like to thank his family and friends for their love and support and dedicates this performance to his mentor, Duane Davis. Also, many thanks to Bernie, Michael, Allan, Kevin and Jeffrey. "I'm proud to be a part of this wonderful experience."

**ERIN KEANEY** (*Maureen*) is thrilled to be a part of *Rent.* Past credits include *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change; R.S.V.P. Broadway*; *Move Over Mrs. Markham*; *A Party to Murder*; and *Crazy For You.* Originally from Toronto, Erin also studied with Second City master class for two years and is working on her one-woman show. "All my love to my family and friends and Brett."

**SHARON LEAL** *(Mimi)* Feeling sentimental returning to native west coast. Last seen on Broadway in *Rent*, and as Gigi in *Miss Saigon.* At New York Theatre Workshop Amanda in *Bright Lights, Big City.* Television Dahlia Crede on CBS' *Guiding Light* and Marita on UPN prime time drama *Legacy.* All thanks and praise to God.

**BRIAN M. LOVE** (*Benny*) is absolutely thrilled and feels blessed to be making his *Rent* debut. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, his regional credits include *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Ken); *Big River* (Jim); *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Valentin); *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?*; and *The All Night Strut.* "Much love to family and all glory and praise to the Lord. Without Him, I'd be nothing."

**KAMILAH MARTIN** *(Joanne)* joins the cast of *Rent* with a host of theatrical credits including *Hello, Dolly!* with Nell Carter and Timoune in *Once on This Island.* She made her film debut in *An American President.* Kamilah gives thanks and honor to God for this opportunity and to her family and friends for their support.

**JENNY MAXWELL** *(Swing)* comes from a musical family in San Antonio, Texas, where she began singing at age 5. She has been seen as Dorothy in *The Wiz* as well as Tina Turner in *Afro Puffs.* After completing her bachelor's degree from Our Lady of the Lake University, she is making her professional debut in *Rent.* She would like to thank God, her family and friends for their constant love and support.

**ALAN MINGO JR.** (*Ensemble*) rejoins this company after appearing as Tom Collins with the second national tour. Alan is from the D.C. metro area, but spent the last three years at the University of California—Irvine, where he just received his masters in acting. Last fall, he was seen co-starring on "Frasier." Alan thanks God, his family and friends (especially mom and Aaron) for their never-ending love and support. He dedicates this performance to James Mingo.

**ERICA MUNOZ** (*Swing*) made her Broadway debut in *Rent.* Credits include *West Side Story, Into the Woods, Rags* and *Jesus Christ Superstar.* She wishes to thank her family, Linz, and James. Special thanks to her Mom for her friendship, support and love.

# WHO'S WHO

**MATTHEW MURPHY** (*Swing*) made his Broadway debut in *Rent*. 22 years of age, Matt has done theatre most of his life. For the last six years he has devoted much of his time to his rock band in Cleveland "Rumor Has It". Matt would like to thank God, family and friends for all their support.

**CARY SHIELDS** *(Ensemble)* A Toronto native, Cary joins this company after having played Roger in the Canadian and second national touring companies. He was recently seen in a Turkish Pantene Shampoo commercial. A singer and songwriter, Cary fronts the rock band Thieves Crossing. He made his theatrical debut in *Rent*. Many thanks to family and friends for continued love and support.

**CHERI SMITH** *(Ensemble)*, a summa cum laude graduate of U.C.L.A. and a native of Los Angeles, is overjoyed to be a part of the *Rent* experience. Cheri has choreographed many productions throughout California. Her theatre credits include Anita in *West Side Story*, The Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,* Reagan in *King Lear* and Elizabeth in *The Crucible.* Cheri wants to thank God, her family, Christian, her friends and the studio for their love and support.

**ROBIN S. WALKER** *(Ensemble)*, a twenty something thespian, is making her professional debut in *Rent*. Robin attended Music & Art High School and The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in N.Y. Robin wishes to thank the Father, from whom all blessings flow, Bishop E. Bernard Jordan, family, friends and most of all, her husband Erik for his undying love and continuous support.

**ALICIA WESTELMAN** *(Ensemble).* Born in Montreal, Canada, Alicia is thrilled to be making her American debut in *Rent.* A recent graduate of Dawson College Theatre Program, Alicia's credits include *Orpheus Descending*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Into the Woods.* "Thanks to friends, family and teachers for their support."

**JONATHAN LARSON** (*Book, Music, Lyrics*) received the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Rent.* *Rent* received four 1996 Tony Awards (including Best Musical and two to Mr. Larson—Best Book of a Musical and Best Score of a Musical); six Drama Desk


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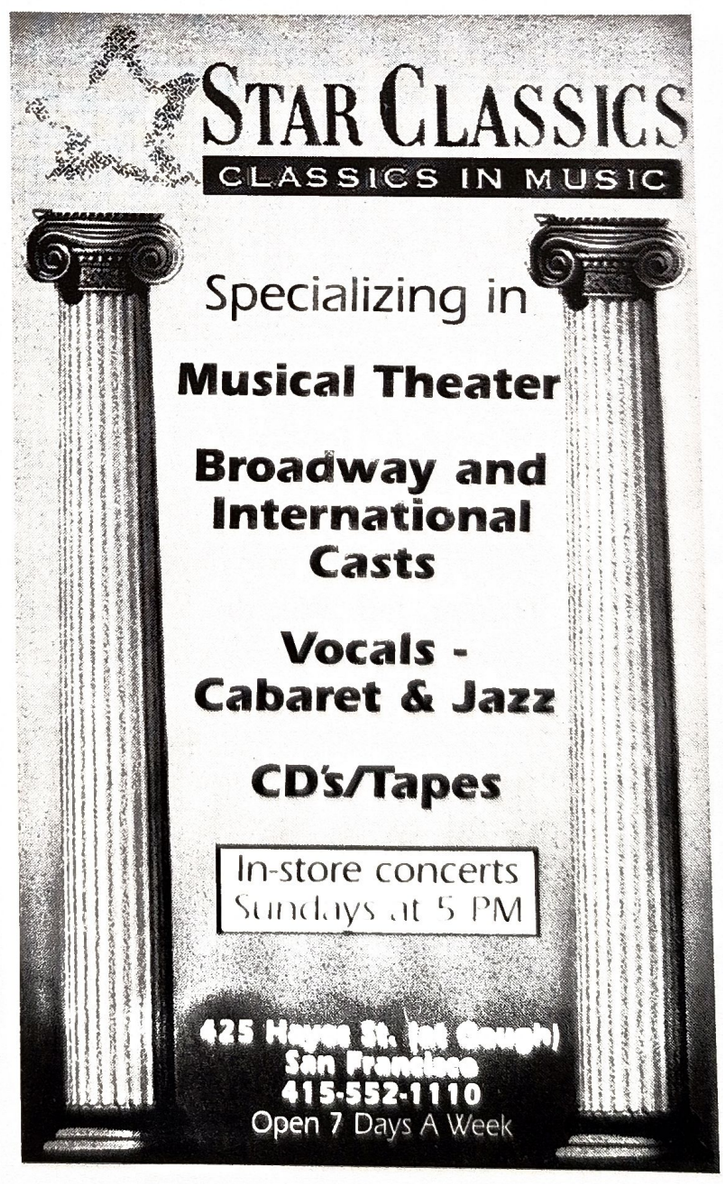

# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Awards (including Best Musical and three to Mr. Larson—Best Book of a Musical, Best Music and Best Lyrics); Best Musical Awards from the New York Drama Critics' Circle and the Outer Critics' Circle (off-Broadway); and three Obie Awards (including one to Mr. Larson for Outstanding Book, Music and Lyrics). Previously, he received the Richard Rodgers Award, the Richard Rodgers Development Grant, the Stephen Sondheim Award and The Gilman & Gonzales–Falla Theatre Foundation's Commendation Award. Earlier work includes *Superbia*; *tick, tick...BOOM!*; the score of *J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation*; and selections of *Sitting on the Edge of the Future*. He also wrote music for "Sesame Street," the children's book-cassettes *An American Tail* and *Land Before Time,* as well as for *Rolling Stone* magazine publisher Jann Wenner. He conceived, directed and wrote four original songs for *Away We Go!*, a children's video. *Rent* had its world premiere on February 13, 1996, at New York Theatre Workshop and opened at Broadway's Nederlander Theatre on April 29, 1996. Mr. Larson died unexpectedly of an aortic aneurysm on January 25, 1996—10 days before his 36th birthday.

**MICHAEL GREIF** (*Direction*) received an Obie Award and Tony and Drama Desk nominations for his direction of *Rent* at New York Theatre Workshop and the Nederlander Theatre. He was appointed artistic director of the La Jolla Playhouse in 1994 where he most recently directed Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters, Rent* and *Boy* by Diana Son. Past productions in La Jolla include *Randy Newman's Faust* (which he also directed at the Goodman Theatre, fall '96), the West Coast premiere of Tony Kushner's *Slavs!* (in a co-production that later played at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles), Neal Bell's adaptation of *Therese Raquin*, Joe Orton's *What the Butler Saw* and Leon Katz's *The Three Cuckolds* (which he co-adapted and co-directed with Bill Irwin). From 1990-1993, Mr. Greif was an artistic associate at Joseph Papp's Public Theatre where he directed Jose Rivera's *Marisol*, Constance Congdon's *Casanova*, Tony Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day*, Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal*, which garnered him an Obie Award and a Drama Desk nomination. He has directed numerous productions across the country including Paula Vogel's *The Baltimore Waltz*, Donald Margulies' *The Loman Family Picnic* (Baltimore's Center Stage), Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*, Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Berkshire Theatre Festival), Chekhov's *The Seagull* (Williamstown Theater Festival), Scott McPherson's *Marvin's Room* (Trinity Repertory) and Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* (Chicago's Remains Theatre). Mr. Greif grew up in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, and received a B.S. from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego. He sends love to the Larson family.

**MARLIES YEARBY** (*Choreography*) received a 1996 Tony Award nomination for Best Choreography for *Rent*. She is a recipient of the New York Dance Performance (Bessie) Award and a nomination for the Joe A. Callaway Award. Theatre commissions include the American Music Theatre Festival and Penumbra Theatre. Ms. Yearby is the founder/artistic director of the Movin' Spirits Dance Theater and has toured with her company both nationally and internationally. Company commissions include Lincoln Center, American Dance Festival, Jacob's Pillow and American Festival of Theatre and Dance in France.

**TIM WEIL** (*Music Supervision and Additional Arrangements*). Broadway: *Rent, Sally Marr and Her Escorts* (Helen Hayes Theatre). Off-Broadway: *Rent* (NYTW); *The Baker's Wife* (York Theatre); *Romance in Hard Times* (NYSF). Other shows, other places: *Blues in the Night* (USIA-South America), *Conrack* (Goodspeed at Chester, Ford's Theatre), *The Rothschilds* (South Florida), *A Christmas Carol* (Composer, Dallas Theater Center). "Love to the Larsons, everyone at NYTW, R.G., the funky Rev and Jonathan."

**PAUL CLAY** (*Set Design*) is a visual artist who designed the sets for *Rent* both on and off Broadway. He has designed for Mabou Mines, Susan Marshal and many others in the New York community. He received a Bessie in 1991 and was an NEA/TCG Designer Fellow in 1993-94. He served as visual advisor on Tom Noonan's feature film

# WHO'S WHO

*What Happened Was*, which received the 1994 Grand Jury Prize at Sundance.

**ANGELA WENDT** (*Costume Design*) received the American Theatre Wing Design Award and a Drama Desk Award nomination for Best Costume Design for *Rent*. Her theatre credits include the off-Broadway and studio productions of *Rent* (NYTW); *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller, 50th anniversary production at the Roundabout Theatre; the American premiere of *Play with Repeats* by Martin Grimp; *Lysistrata* by Barry Edelstein; *The Autobiography of Aihen Fiction* by Kate Moira Ryan (Samuel Beckett Theatre); *Twelfth Night* (Tennessee Rep); *The Great Pretenders* (Juilliard); *Marisol* by Jose Rivera (Public). Feature film: *Childhood's End* directed by Jeff Lipsky. Dance: *Tilliiboyo* and *Regions* by Molissa Fenley; *Savanna* by Peggy Baher. She has also designed numerous music videos in the United States and Europe.

**BLAKE BURBA** (*Lighting Design*) received a 1996 Tony Award nomination for Best Lighting Design for *Rent*. At New York Theatre Workshop: lighting designer for *Rent, Quills,* the 1994 studio production of *Rent*; assistant lighting designer for *Slavs!, Blown Sideways Through Life, Owners* and *Traps.* Resident A.L.D. at Opera Theatre of St. Louis for four seasons and at Glimmerglass Opera for one season. Other recent New York designs include *Trojan Women: A Love Story* at En Garde Arts; *Flipzoids* at the Ma-Yi Theatre Company; and *Squeeze Box!* every Friday night at Don Hill's.

**KURT FISCHER** (*Sound Design*), a fifth generation Iowan, is thrilled to be making his Broadway sound design debut with *Rent*. Other credits include assistant sound designer to Otts Munderloh; production sound engineer for *Nick & Nora, Jelly's Last Jam, Sunset Boulevard, Whistle Down the Wind*; and associate sound designer to Martin Levan. Kurt would like to thank his mentors and family for their support and patience.

**STEVE SKINNER** (*Arrangements*) worked with Jonathan Larson as arranger and recording producer for 12 years. He received the 1996 Drama Desk Award for Best Arrangements for *Rent*. Broadway: *Doonesbury* (keyboards and assistant conductor). Recording/arranging for Bette Midler,

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# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Taylor Dayne, Billy Mann, Chaka Khan, Bebe & Cece Winans and Michael Crawford.

**BILLY ARONSON'S** *(Original Concept and Additional Lyrics)* plays have been honored with publication in Best American Short Plays '92-'93 and are frequently performed at Ensemble Studio Theater. His lyric writing includes the libretto for an opera being developed by American Opera Projects, and first draft lyrics for "Santa Fe" and "I Should Tell You." His new play, *The Art Room* will premiere at Washington, DC's Woolly Mammoth Theatre this spring. His true love is Lisa Vogel.

**LYNN M. THOMSON** *(Dramaturg)* is a dramaturg, director and teacher. She brought nearly twenty years of new play dramaturgical experience to her months of work with Jonathan Larson on the script of *Rent*. She was Associate Artistic Director for the Philadelphia Theatre Company where she created and administered a new play festival. She has directed over 100 productions of both new plays and revivals at regional and New York theatre, and many more workshops and readings of new plays. She is currently head of the MFA Program in Dramaturgy at Brooklyn College.

**BOKO SUZUKI** *(Musical Director/ Conductor)* Most recently Boko served as the Music Supervisor for the Australian production of *Rent*. He has conducted the Canadian productions of *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Miss Saigon* and served as music director of both the German and Canadian tour productions of *The Who's Tommy* and the Live Entertainment production of *Sunset Boulevard*, as well as appearing as guest conductor with the Toronto Symphony. Boko is also active as a freelance musician and composer and is currently a recording artist with Avalon Music.

**JOHN CORKER** *(General Manager)* is the General Manager of the Broadway and two national touring productions of *Rent*. He is the U.S. General Manager for the German and London (West End) productions as well. He was the General Manager of the pre-Broadway tour of Neil Simon's *Proposals* and was on the general management team for the Broadway musical *Side Show*. John is associated with The Producing Office Inc., owned by Kevin McCollum and Jeffrey Seller, in other producing and business ventures. Prior to *Rent*, he served as Vice President of The Booking Office, which booked and was a producer for national touring productions of *West Side Story, Damn Yankees* starring Jerry Lewis, and *Man of La Mancha* starring Robert Goulet, among others. John has also held the position of Director of Operations for PACE Theatrical Group Inc., where he oversaw the management of Broadway touring attractions in 24 North American cities.

**BERNARD TELSEY CASTING** (*Casting Director*). Bernie, Will, David, Heidi, Lori, Vicki and Jacqui thank Joanne Akalaitis, Jane Anderson, Noel Coward, Graciela Daniele, Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich, Steve Eich, Scott Elliott, Robert Falls, Horton Foote, Michael Greif, Peter Hedges, Ivo van Hove, Allen and Albert Hughes, Doug Hughes, Neel Keller, Mark Lamos, Jonathan Larson, Mimi Leder, Diane Malecki, Donald Margulies, David Mamet, Brian Mertes, Mark Morris, Eugene O'Neill, David Rabe, Adam Resnick, David Richenthal, Mark Rucker, Peter Sellars, Paul Simon, Derek Walcott, Michael Wilson, Les Waters, Tim Weill, Oscar Wilde, HSC, LJP, LWT, MCC and NYTW for trusting us. "Although we have our pride, we have been known to cast for food."

**TOM BARTLETT** *(Production Supervisor).* Broadway: *The Phantom of the Opera, Grease!, The Goodbye Girl.* National tours: *Grease!, Lost in Yonkers, Rumors, Driving Miss Daisy, South Pacific, Dreamgirls* (four companies including Tokyo and Paris), *Song & Dance, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Bye Bye Birdie, The Music Man.* Other credits: "The 50th Anniversary Tony Awards," "A Tribute to Angela Lansbury," *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Lincoln Center.

**UNITECH PRODUCTIONS INC.** (*Technical Supervision*). The Unitech production team—Brian Lynch, Ken Kenneally, Jack Culver and Manuel Becker—have collectively mounted more than 200 Broadway, off-Broadway, regional and touring productions. Recent productions in addition to *Rent* include *Molly Sweeney* and *Buried Child.*

**MARTHA BANTA** *(Assistant Director)* is the Artistic Director and co-founder of the

# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Adirondack Theatre Festival, a summer theater festival in Lake George, NY. She was Artistic Associate at New York Theatre Workshop and is the director of *Rent* in Japan and Germany. Currently she is the Assistant Director for *Rent* on Broadway, the first national company and in London. Some New York directing credits include new plays at the Clark Theatre at Lincoln Center, New York Theatre Workshop, New Georges, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Tiny Mythic, Orange Thoughts, Don't Tell Mama, and 52nd Street Project. She has also been a guest teacher at SUNY Stonybrook, Vassar College and New York University.

**DAVID SANTANA** (*Wig, Hair and Make-up Design*). Having distinguished himself as a stylist for such houses as Chanel, Estée Lauder and Dior, David is proud to have made his Broadway debut as part of the *Rent* design team. A native of Puerto Rico, he wishes to give thanks to his family, friends and Larry for all their love and support.

**TONY GERBER** (*Filmmaker*) films include *Small Taste of Heaven* (1997 Sundance and Rotterdam film festivals) and the upcoming feature *Side Streets* starring Valeria Golino, Art Malik, Leon, Shabana Azmi, Mirjana Jokovic and Shashi Kapoor (Cornerstone Films with Merchant/Ivory). He wrote the screenplay *West Wind* for HBO's *America's Dream II* (Danny Glover, Exec. Producer) with playwright Lynn Nottage. Commissioned films for theater include Mabou Mines' *Reel to Real* (The Kitchen), *Mother* (LaMama) and the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *Rent*.

**KRISTEN HARRIS** (*Production Stage Manager*). Credits include *Buried Child* and *The American Play* at American Repetory Theatre, *Cloud Tectonics* and *Happy Days* at La Jolla Playhouse, *Him* with Christopher Walken at NY Shakespeare Festival and the European Tour of Robert Wilson's *Hamlet. A Monologue*. Kristen is returning to the first national tour of *Rent* after being with the second national tour for over a year. She also stage managed the original studio production of *Rent* at NY Theatre Workshop in 1994.

**ROBERT WITHEROW** (*Stage Manager*) most recently toured with the second national tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*. His work in regional theatre includes stage managing more than 20 productions at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.

**KRISTIN NEWHOUSE** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) joins Rent after an 18-city tour of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Other credits include *Grease!* (Broadway) and *Five Guys Named Moe* at the Cape Playhouse.

**JEFFREY SELLER** (*Producer*). After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1986, Seller moved to New York City. He wanted to be a Broadway producer. First he was a publicist. Then he was a booking agent. In 1996, Seller produced, with Kevin McCollum and Allan S. Gordon, *Rent* on Broadway for which he won the 1996 Tony Award for Best Musical. *De La Guarda*, his latest show, is currently running at The Daryl Roth Theatre in New York.

**KEVIN McCOLLUM** (*Producer*) is the CEO and President of the Ordway Music Theatre in St. Paul, Minn. He co-founded the Booking Group and Producing Office with Jeffrey Seller, and their companies produce and distribute musicals and plays throughout the world. McCollum was the executive producer of the feature film *Jeffrey* and was the recipient of the Robert Whitehead Award for Outstanding Commercial Theatre Producing in 1995. McCollum was trained at the Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati and earned his master's degree in film producing from the University of Southern California. McCollum received the 1996 Tony Award for producing *Rent*. *De La Guarda*, his latest show, is currently running in New York.

**ALLAN S. GORDON** (*Producer*) is delighted to have made his debut as a Broadway producer with this production of *Rent*, which he believes holds a life affirming message for people of all ages and backgrounds. Mr. Gordon is also represented on Broadway by Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, starring Brian Dennehy, and Eugene O'Neil's *The Iceman Cometh* starring Kevin Spacey. For both, he has just received Tony nominations. He recently produced Neil Simon's *Prisoner of Second Avenue*, starring Richard Dreyfuss and

# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Marsha Mason in London's West End, which marks the beginning of a one-year, four play commitment which Mr. Gordon hopes will bring exciting new works to both the West End and Broadway. Allan Gordon's career spans the fields of law, investment banking, real estate, and venture capital. He frequently participates in theatre and film and in the financing of productions through his investment banking firm, Gordon, Haskett & Co. and theater production company, Allan S. Gordon Productions. He recently established the Allan S. Gordon Foundation, which grants awards to individuals and not-for-profit theatres for the development of new work. Mr. Gordon is a graduate of Harvard Law School, a trustee of New York Theatre Workshop, a member of the League of American Theatres and Producers and received the 1996 Tony Award for Best Musical for *Rent*.

**NEW YORK THEATRE WORKSHOP** (*James C. Nicola, Artistic Director*). Founded in 1979 by Stephen Graham, New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW), an off-Broadway theatre company, is dedicated to producing challenging and unpredictable new theatre and promoting the creative growth and work of artists with whom it shares a vision. *Rent* was developed at NYTW over the course of four years and was originally produced at its East Village theatre in early 1996.

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*Information in "Who's Who in the Cast" is provided by the production. Where opinions are expressed, they are those of the players, not necessarily those of* PLAYBILL® *magazine.*

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## STAFF FOR "RENT"

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*Production Supervisor*
**TOM BARTLETT**

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*Casting*
**BERNARD TELSEY CASTING**
**BERNARD TELSEY, WILL CANTLER**
**DAVID VACCARI, HEIDI MARSHALL**
**LORI SAPOSNICK**

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**COMPANY MANAGER** ..... **SCOTT M. ELLIS**
**PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER** ..... **KRISTEN HARRIS**
Technical Supervision ..... Unitech Productions inc.
Brian Lynch, Ken Keneally,
Manuel Becker, Jack Culver
Assistant Director ..... Martha Banta
Stage Manager ..... Robert Witherow
Wig, Hair and Makeup Designer ..... David Santana
Production Dance Supervisor ..... Schele Williams
Music Coordinator ..... Michael K...
Costume Design Supervisor ..... Lisa Z...
Assistant General Manager ..... Marcia Goldber...
Assistant Company Manager ..... Frank Buckley
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Kristin Newhouse
Assistant Set Designer ..... Matt Maraffi, Ben Bus...
Assistant Costume Designers ..... Rafi Mercado,
Claudia Hill, Lisa Zinni
Assistant Lighting Designer ..... Noele Stollmack
Assistant Sound Designer ..... Terry L. Dycus
Choreographer's Assistant ..... Terri Cousar Shockley
Dance Captain ..... Kristoffer Cusick
Head Carpenter ..... William Garvey
Head Electrician ..... Manuel Becker
Property Master ..... Ronald Groomes
Head Sound Engineer ..... Rob Lindsay
Assistant Sound Engineer ..... Alain Van Achte
Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Tim Timlin
Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Frances Cook
Assistant Electricians ..... Keith Buchanan,
Tom Grasso
Hair and Makeup Supervisor ..... Jennifer Johnson
Production Property Master ..... Ronald Groomes
Advance Carpenter ..... Justin Garvey
Production Hair Supervisor ..... Roger Stricker
Production Soundman ..... Brian Ronan
Producing Associate ..... Eric M. Schnall
Assistant to Mr. Corker ..... Christine Stump
Assistant to Messrs.
Seller and McCollum ..... Anne Tanaka
Marketing Assistant ..... Molly Solomon
Merchandise Manager ..... Rick Anderson
Digital Graphics ..... Jamie Leo
Ceramic Artist ..... Leslie Wagner
Lobby Art ..... Billy Miller
Costume Assistant ..... Candice Harper
Special Garment Construction ..... Colleen Morris
Costume Intern ..... Tiel C. Roman
Production Assistant ..... Leigh Silverman
Casting Associate ..... Victoria Pettibone
Casting Assistant ..... Jacqueline Mia Pessah
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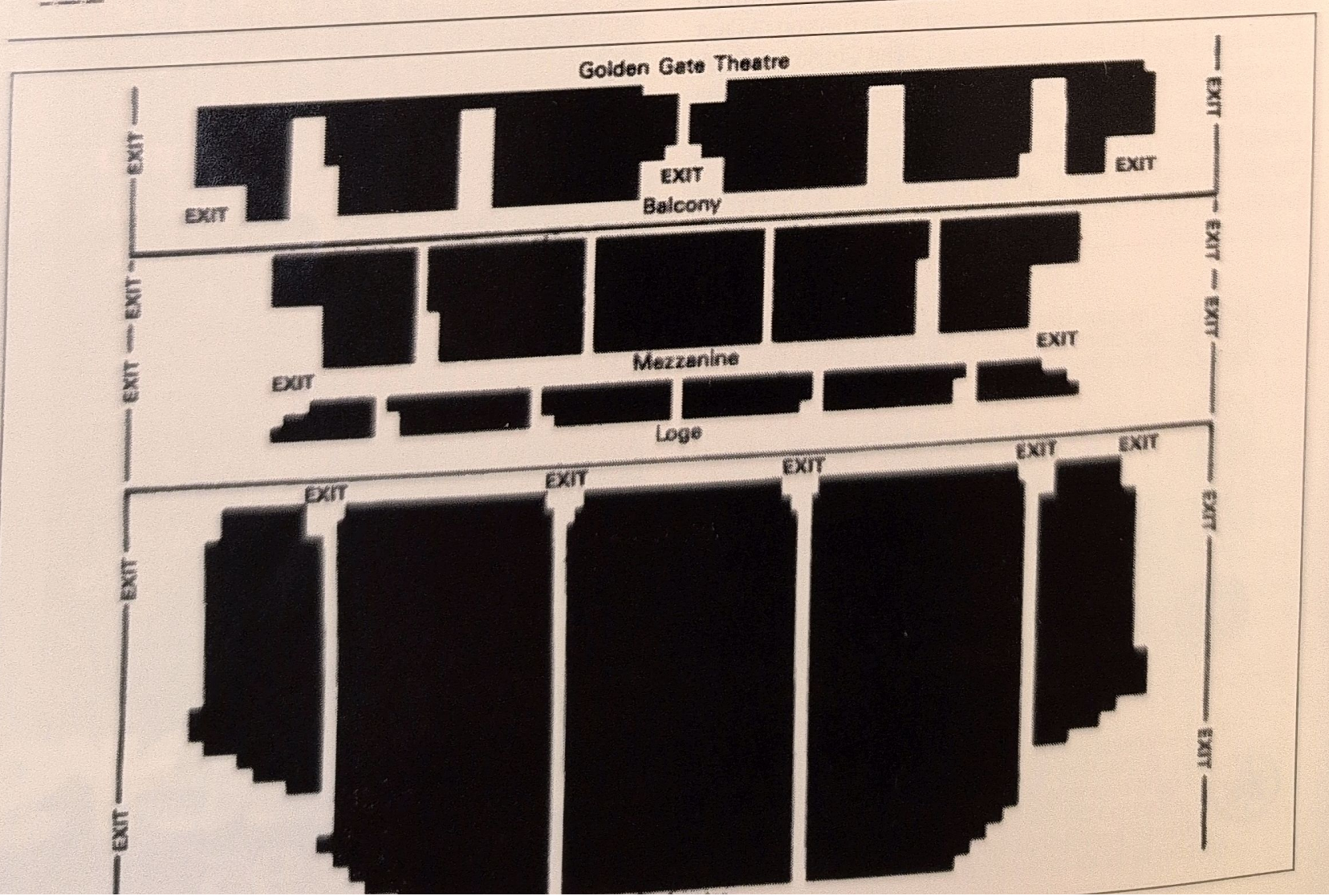

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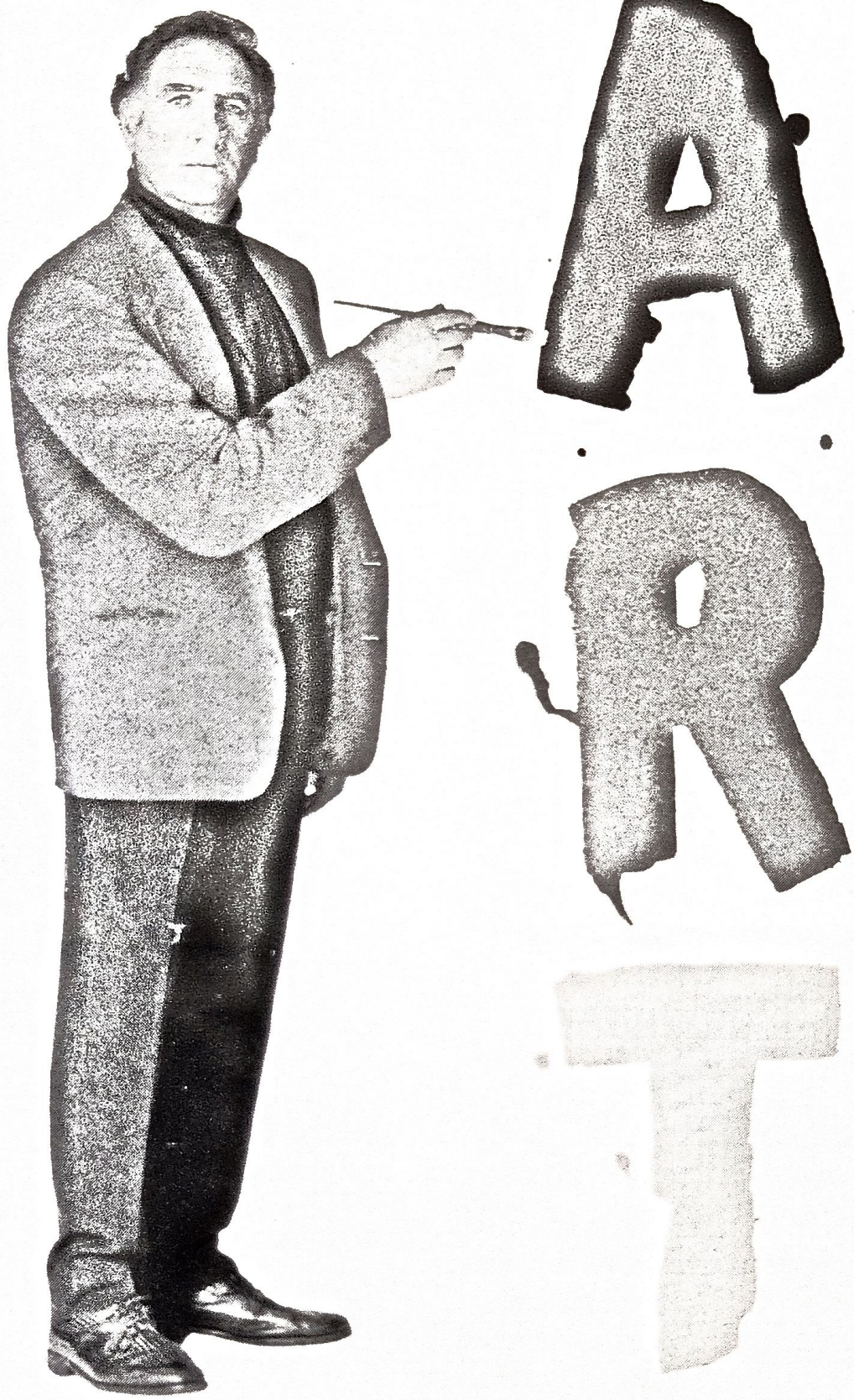


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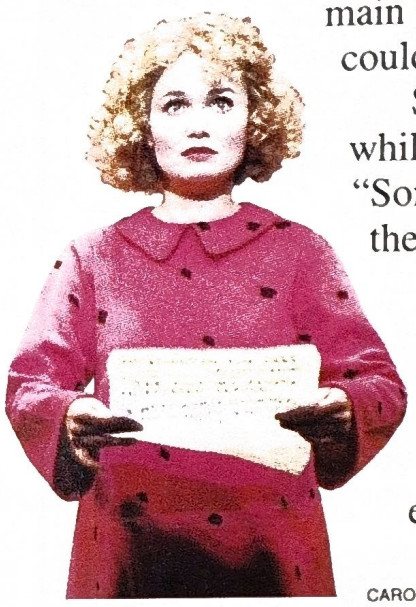
# a theatregoer's notebook

by Harry Haun

**The Other Sally** Last year, it was Sally Bowles, the *Cabaret* chanteuse, who bowled everybody over. This year, the waif who wins our hearts is Sally Brown, the angst-ridden four-year-old in a world of six-year-olds in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. As played by **KRISTIN CHENOWETH**, she is an endearing, live-action cartoon.

"I don't look at it as playing a cartoon character," Chenoweth admits. "I went to Charles Schulz's strips to find out Sally's main personality traits, so I could bring those to life." She turned into Sally while trying out for Patty. "Something I did during the audition gave [director] Michael Mayer the idea of dropping Patty from the show and creating Sally." Mayer mined enough Sally material in Schulz's strip to invent this whole new character, and songwriter Andrew Lippa devised a riotous show-stopper where Sally staggers around, unfocused and susceptible, from one new philosophy to another.



CAROL ROSEGG

Chenoweth has been in New York four-and-a-half years and been in about that many shows—*Steel Pier*, *A New Brain*, *Strike Up the Band* and a workshop of Lippa's new show, *The Wild Party*—yet this was not where she was heading.

You'd not guess it from her squeaky-voiced comedics, but she has an operatic background. "I have my master's degree in opera, and I was a Metropolitan Opera Audition award winner." Two weeks before she was to enter a Philadelphia conservatory, she auditioned for a role at the Paper Mill Playhouse in The Marx Brothers musical, *Animal Crackers*—and got it! Opera started receding as an option. It's not entirely out of the picture, though. "Of course," she laughs, "if an opera company came and asked me to do *Tales of Hoffmann* or *Candide* or Gilbert and Sullivan, I'm outta here."

**The Other Annie** B'way's original, Tony-nominated *Annie* is continuing her happily-ever-aftering as Belle in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. "*Beauty*," says **ANDREA McARDLE**, "is more of a cartoony kind of acting than *Annie*. Annie was real and honest—and Belle is too, in a way. Even with inanimate objects to play off of and craziness going on around her, she's still a reality. The audience sees the show through her eyes."

Like Shirley Temple, McArdle is a generation's hour-gauge, locked in the minds of many as an eternal pre-teen singing for the sun to come out tomorrow. In point of fact, she is 35, happily married for 11 years to composer Edd Kalehoff and a stage mother who declined Disney's offer to put ten-year-old daughter Alexis in the upcoming TV remake of *Annie* ("That's not really the kind of voice she has, and that's not who she is.").

JOAN MARCUS

But mother and daughter tour together on occasion (*Les Miz*, *Oliver*, *Annie Get Your Gun*). The latter is the more conspicuous Annie in town, and McArdle has her sites set on it when she checks out of *Beauty and the Beast* in October. "I've done maybe five different productions of it. And that score! It's my score. To someone like me, Bernadette [Peters, *Annie Get Your Gun*'s current star] is one of the few living legends I can look up to."

She's also laying in wait for Cameron Mackintosh to import his *Oliver!* "I would like to be considered for Nancy if or when it comes over. Absolutely!" Who says it's a hard-knock life? Happy endings have a way of finding Andrea McArdle.



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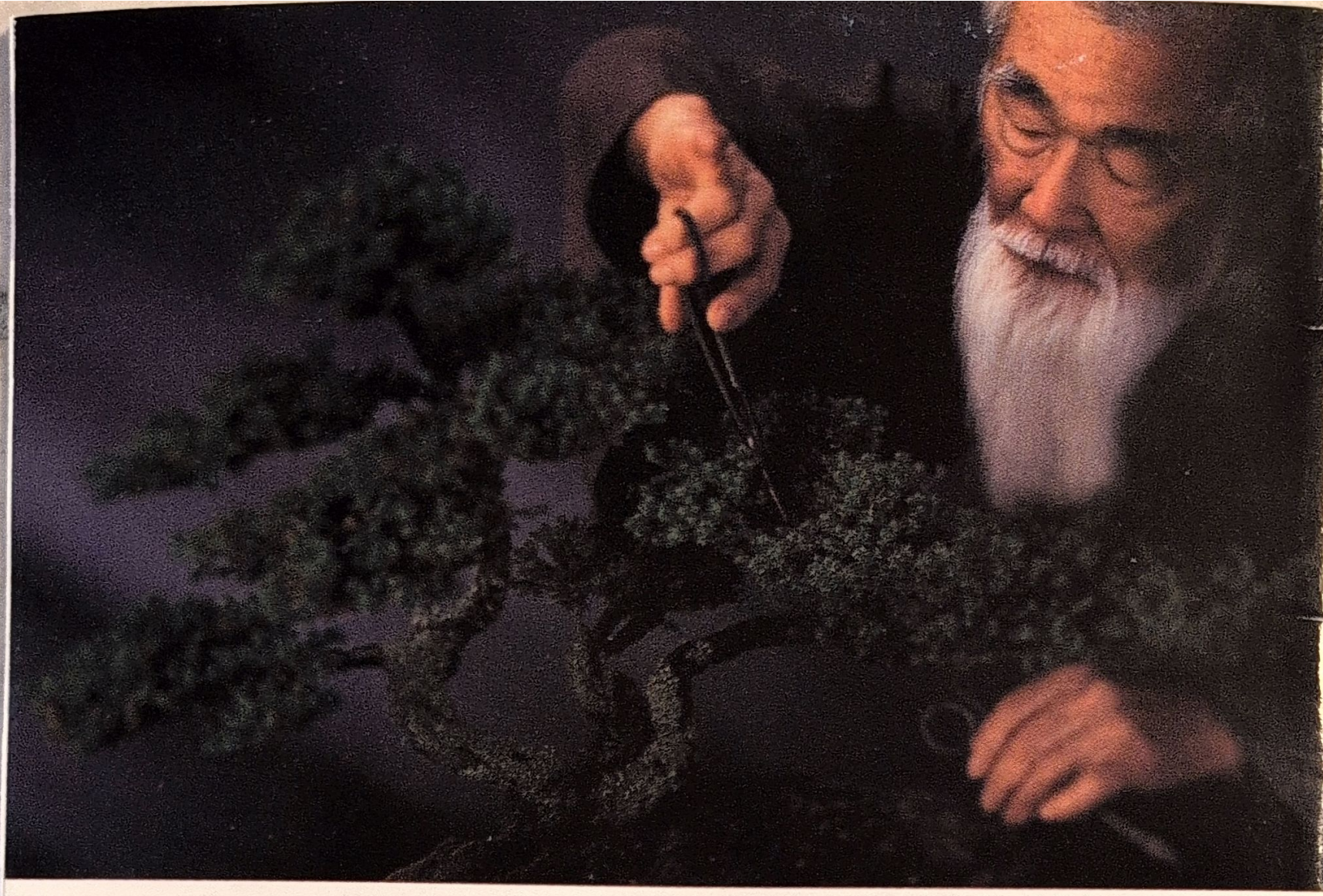

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